AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-4 (cancelled)

Claims 5 (currently amended): A method for oxidizing and/or decomposing organic and/or inorganic oxidizable substances in waste water by wet oxidation with a use of a catalyst, ~~wherein~~ which comprises:

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances ~~are oxidized and/or decomposed~~ with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of the catalyst under pressure ~~such that said~~ which produces an exhaust gas, wherein the waste water ~~retains the~~ remains in a liquid phase ~~thereof~~ at a temperature of 50 to less than 170°C ~~and~~, wherein the catalyst contains activated carbon;

and ~~an~~ controlling the concentration of oxygen ~~concentration~~ in ~~an~~ the exhaust gas ~~is controlled in the~~ in a range of 0 to 5 vol%.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The method according to claim 5, wherein the catalyst further contains at least one element selected from the group consisting of Pt, Pd, Rh, Ru, Ir and Au.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The method according to claim 5, wherein the catalyst further contains at least one element selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, Ta, Fe, Co, Mn, Al, Si, Ga, Ge, Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, In, Sn, Sb and Bi.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The method according to claim ~~7~~ 5, wherein the catalyst contains pores having a 0.1 to 10 μm pore diameter and a ~~decrease value of~~ a specific pore volume ~~having 0.1 to 10 μm pore diameter~~ , wherein the specific pore volume is decreased to a range of 0.01 to 0.5 ml/g after at least one element selected from the group ~~in claim 7~~ consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, Ta, Fe, Co, Mn, Al, Si, Ga, Ge, Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, In, Sn, Sb

and Bi is deposited on the activated carbon ~~is in the range from 0.01 to 0.5 ml/g~~ when compared with ~~a~~ the specific pore volume ~~thereof~~ before the element is deposited.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The method according to claim ~~7~~ 5, wherein the catalyst has ~~a decrease value of~~ a specific surface area , wherein the specific surface area is decreased to a range of 50 to 800 m^2/g after at least one element selected from the group ~~in claim 7~~ consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, Ta, Fe, Co, Mn, Al, Si, Ga, Ge, Sc, Y, La, Ce, Pr, Mg, Ca, Sr, Ba, In, Sn, Sb and Bi is deposited on the activated carbon ~~is in the range from 50 to 800 m^2/g~~ when compared with ~~a~~ the specific surface area ~~thereof~~ before the element is deposited.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The method according to claim 5, wherein ~~a supply~~ the amount of the oxygen containing gas which is added is controlled so that ~~to obtain [oxygen amount in the oxygen containing gas supplied]/[oxygen demand of the waste water at maximum waste water treatment efficiency] = in the range from 0.8 to 1.3~~ the amount of oxygen in the oxygen containing gas relative to the oxygen demand of the waste water at maximum waste water treatment efficiency is a ratio of 0.8:1 to 1.3:1.

Claim 11 (original): The method according to claim 5, wherein the oxygen containing gas and the waste water descend concurrently at the catalyst.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method according to claim 5, wherein the oxygen containing gas is supplied from at least two ~~location~~ locations by dividing the total amount of the oxygen containing gas.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A method for oxidizing and/or decomposing organic and/or inorganic oxidizable substances in waste water by wet oxidation with a use of a catalyst, ~~wherein~~ which comprises:

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances ~~are oxidized and/or decomposed~~ with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of ~~a~~ the catalyst under pressure ~~such that said~~ , wherein the waste water ~~retains the~~ remains in a liquid phase ~~thereof~~ at a temperature of 50 to less than 170°C ~~and~~ ,wherein the catalyst contains activated carbon; and

~~supplying~~ adding a catalyst protection liquid which contains easily decomposable substances at the time of a temperature increase during the commencement ~~rising when starting up a operation~~ of the wet oxidation and/or at the time of a temperature decrease when wet oxidation is suspended ~~lowering when suspending the operation~~.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The method according to claim 13, wherein ~~a supply~~ the amount of the catalyst protection liquid which is added is controlled so ~~as to~~ that the easily decomposable substances in the protection liquid ~~is remained~~ remain in a liquid phase when passed through the catalyst.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The method according to claim 13, wherein ~~a~~ the temperature ~~during~~ at which the catalyst protection liquid is ~~supplied~~ added is lower than ~~a~~ the temperature ~~during~~ at which the waste water is treated.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The method according to claim 13, wherein the step of oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances with the oxygen containing gas produces an exhaust gas, and wherein the concentration of oxygen in the exhaust gas is controlled in a range of 0 to 5 vol% ~~an oxygen concentration in an exhaust gas is controlled in the range from 0 to 5 vol%~~ at the time of a temperature increase during the commencement ~~rising when starting up~~

~~a operation~~ of the wet oxidation and/or at the time of a temperature decrease when wet oxidation is suspended ~~lowering when suspending the operation~~.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The method according to claim 13, wherein ~~a supply~~ the amount of ~~an~~ the oxygen containing gas which is added ~~or an oxygen uncontaining gas~~ is controlled so that ~~to obtain [oxygen amount in the gas supplied]/[oxygen demand in the protection liquid at maximum catalyst protecting efficiency] = in the range from 0 to 1.3 at the time when supplying the catalyst protection liquid to the catalyst~~ the amount of oxygen in the oxygen containing gas relative to the oxygen demand of the protection liquid at maximum catalyst protecting efficiency when the catalyst protection liquid is added is a ratio of 0:1 to 1.3:1.

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method for oxidizing and/or decomposing organic and/or inorganic oxidizable substances in waste water by wet oxidation with a use of a catalyst, ~~wherein~~ which comprises:

oxidizing and/or decomposing the oxidizable substances ~~are oxidized and/or decomposed~~ with an oxygen containing gas in the presence of a catalyst under pressure ~~such that said~~ ,wherein the waste water ~~retains the~~ remains in a liquid phase ~~thereof~~ at a temperature of 50 to less than 170°C~~;~~ , wherein the catalyst contains activated carbon; and

~~supplying~~ adding a catalyst recovering liquid which contains easily decomposable substances to the catalyst ~~under temperatures~~ at a temperature in the range from 55°C to less than 200°C.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The method according to claim 18, wherein ~~a supply~~ the amount of the catalyst recovering liquid which is added is controlled so ~~as to~~ that the easily decomposable substances in the recovering liquid ~~is remained~~ remain in a liquid phase when passed through the catalyst.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The method according to claim 18, wherein ~~a supply~~ the amount of ~~an~~ the oxygen containing gas ~~or an oxygen uncontaining gas~~ is controlled so that ~~to obtain [oxygen amount in the gas supplied]/ [oxygen demand in the recovering liquid at maximum catalyst recovering efficiency] = in the range from 0 to 1.3 at the time when supplying the catalyst recovering liquid to the catalyst~~ the amount of oxygen in the oxygen containing gas relative to the oxygen demand of the protection liquid at maximum catalyst protecting efficiency when the catalyst protection liquid is added is a ratio of 0:1 to 1.3:1.